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July 14, 2016

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LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL
POLICY OFFICE

Interested Party List

RE: Final Checklist EA for Block Mountain Slate and Stone, Inc., for an Operating Permit

Dear Reader:

Previously a Draft Checklist Environmental Assessment (CEA) was issued for an operating permit requested by Block Mountain Slate and Stone, Inc., (BMSS) located at PO Box 216, Plains, MT 59859. BMSS filed an application for an Operating Permit on June 18, 2015, to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Hard Rock Mining Bureau in Helena and a draft EA was issued on May 12, 2016.

The application for an operating permit included seven sites. Three of the sites would fall under the general quarry permit, which covers sites that would not disturb more than five acres at any one time. A programmatic environmental assessment covers those sites. The remaining four sites (Henry Creek 1, Kunzer, DNRC and Banana Stone) required an environmental assessment as more than five acres would be disturbed at any one time.

Site Name	Location	Distance from nearest Community	Proposed Permit Boundary (acres)	Proposed 5-Year Disturbance	Proposed 20-Year Disturbance
Henry Creek 1	T19N, R25W, Section 6	3 miles SE of Plains	43.7 acres	9.3 acres	15 acres
Henry Creek 2	T20N, R25W, Section 31	3 miles SE of Plains	18.3 acres	4.5 acres	7 acres
Kuester	T20N, R27W, Section 24	7 miles W of Plains	14.5 acres	3 acres	5 acres
Kunzer	T20N, R26W, Section 7	5 miles NW of Plains	46.4 acres	8.5 acres	10.3 acres

DNRC	T20 N, R25W Section 34	3 miles SE of Plains	54.1 acres	7.7 acres	13.5 acres
Bald Howard	T19N, R25W, Section 28	0.5 miles SE of Paradise	12.2 acres	3 acres	6 acres
Banana Stone	T20N, R26W, Section 12	5 miles E of Plains	312 acres	16 acres	42.2 acres

BMSS is proposing a 20-year mine life. Within the permitted acres less than 100 acres would be disturbed over the life of the permit. Reclamation would be completed as concurrently with rock product activities as possible.

Access to all sites would be by existing roads. The access roads would remain for future use. All of the sites have been previously quarried. Some sites have been logged in the past and have had limited livestock grazing. The sites provide recreational opportunities for the landowners.

The rock product would consist of various rock types and mineralogies. The rock may be found near the surface, such as talus, or in-place such as bedded metasediments, sandstones, schist, shale, limestone, basalt, rhyolite, marble, etc. The rock could be covered by overburden, exposed as outcrops, or found as scattered rock lying on the surface. The rock to be mined is part of the Ravalli Group and Pritchard Formation of the Belt Supergroup.

Rock would be removed by hand picking, drilling and blasting followed by excavation and removal, or ripping by a dozer, or excavator. Heavy equipment would be used, such as loaders, excavators, and dozers. Some oversize rock would be sold as riprap. Rock would be sorted and stockpiled on site. Some splitting, breaking, crushing, and sawing of rock would be done for landscaping uses or for producing aggregates. The rock would be placed on pallets, in bins, or in trucks for shipment.

Hours of operation would be from 6 am to 4 pm. Occasionally, the operator may have to run two shifts to meet contract time frames.

Mining has occurred at the sites in recent years. BMSS cannot stay under five acres of disturbance at any one time at four of the sites as required for a Small Miner Exclusion Statement (SMES) and therefore must apply for an operating permit. The operating permit would allow the quarries to continue to be worked, with total disturbance, including what has already been disturbed, of about 52 acres over the next five years and up to 99 acres over the twenty year life of the quarries.

The processing plant would consist of screening and crushing equipment and a turn-around for trucks, as well as soil and product stockpiles. Water for dust control would be brought in from off-site.

The Draft CEA addressed issues and concerns raised during public involvement and from agency scoping. Additional comments were generated with release of the draft EA. Those comments are addressed below. The agencies have decided to approve the permit with two mitigations as noted in the response to public comments.

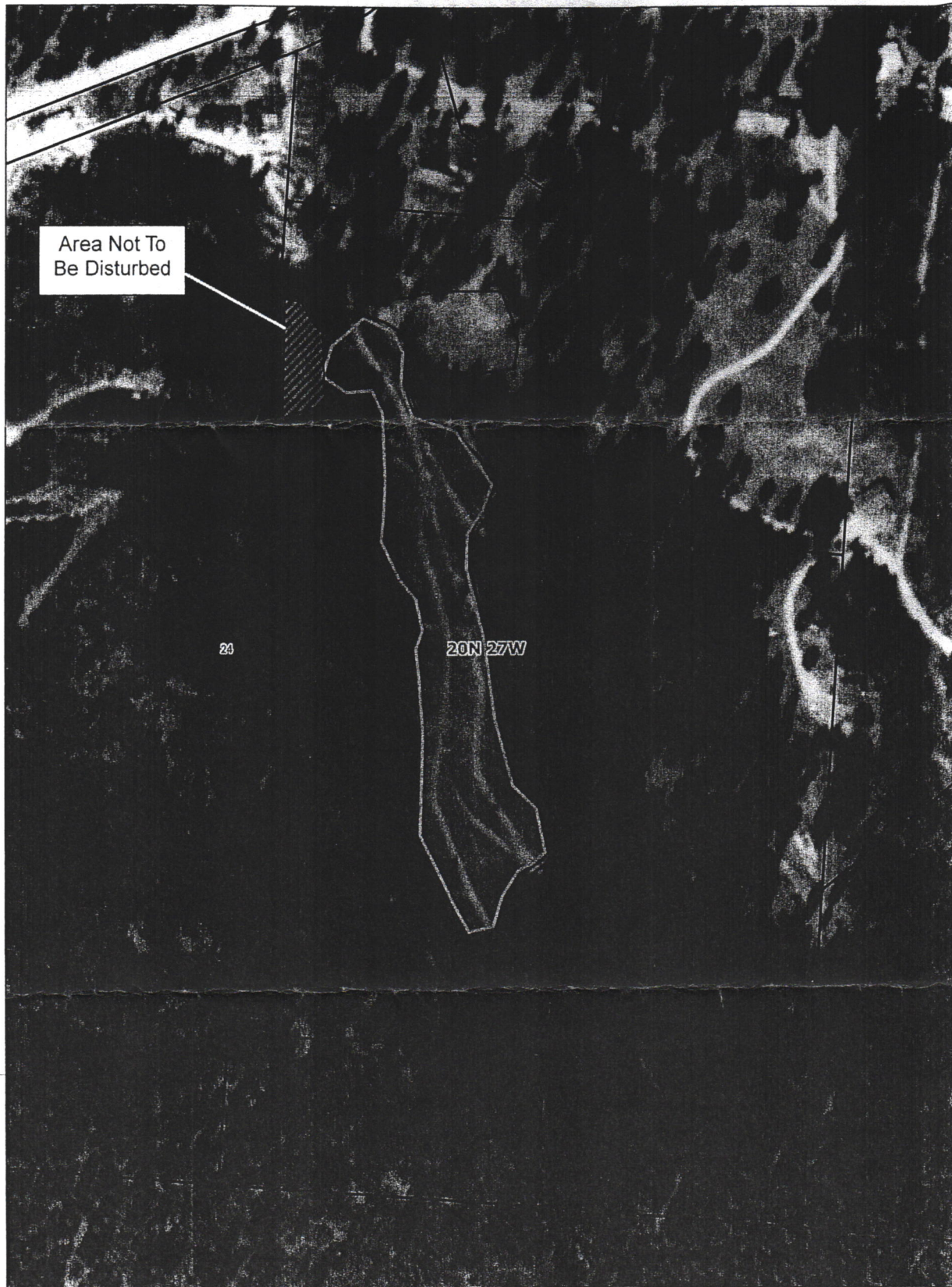
Kuester Site: A concern was expressed that removal of rock may cause a landslide at the toe of the slope. The removal of rock from a talus slope should not cause a landslide but may well cause rock above the area where rock is being removed to ravel downslope, filling the excavation. The reveling could cause additional disturbance upslope towards the ridge top, and outside of the permit area. Due to this concern a mitigation is being imposed on the operating permit to exclude disturbance in a small area of the proposed Kuester site. See the attached map.

Kunzer Site: A concern was expressed about possible damage to a well. Due to the minimal use of explosives and depth of the well this was not considered to be a likely impact. However, during a site inspection it was noted that part of the proposed disturbance area would cross over a ridge, near a home site and creating a possible road hazard due to rock rolling downslope. Due to these concerns a mitigation is being imposed on the operating permit to exclude disturbance in an area of the proposed Kunzer site. Due to the steepness of the slope on the southeast side a fence or berm will also need to be emplaced to prevent rock from rolling off the permit site. See the attached map.





Warren D. McCullough
Warren D. McCullough, Chief
Hard Rock Mining Bureau

7/15/14
Date

Block Mountain Stone Kuester Quarry Map



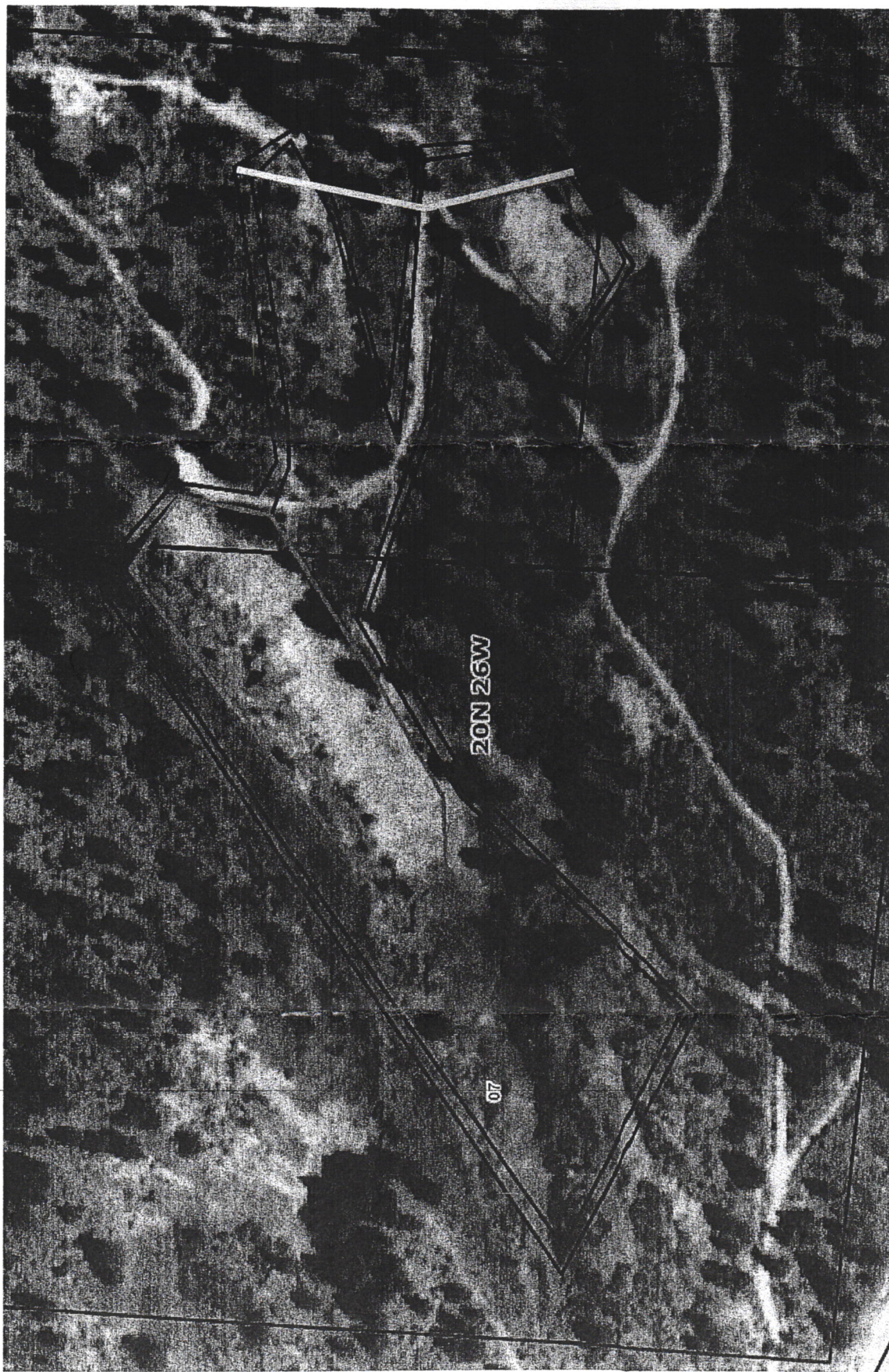
Legend

-  Permit Boundary
-  20 YR Disturbance
-  5 YR Disturbance
-  Current Disturbance

0 0.025 0.05 0.1
Miles

Map Created by: Amanda J. Miller 4/22/14
Edited by: Garrett Smith 6/15/2016





Block Mountain Slate and Stone Kunzer Quarry adjusted permitted disturbance boundary. Adjustment of the eastern permitted disturbance boundary line (yellow line in color, white line in black and white print), relocated to the west of the old ridge road.